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EKME #: 3956245

To: Catherine Blewett
Pour:

Date: August 24, 2018

Object: INFORMATION FOR THE MINISTER – SENTINEL COD FISHERIES

From / Jacqueline Perry, A/RDG Newfoundland and Labrador Region
De:

Via:

AUG 24 2018

Additional approvals:
Autre(s) approbation(s):

Material for the Minister Documents pour le Ministre

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Your Signature
Votre signature

Information

Screen: The Department has assessed this issue in full:

Filtre:

- It contains no reference to matters covered by the screen relating to J.D. Irving Limited.
- It contains matters referenced in the screen relating to J.D. Irving Limited, but in our view does not engage the screen.
- In our view, the screen relating to J.D. Irving Limited should be engaged.

Remarks: This briefing note was developed in consultation with the following regions/sectors: Fisheries Management NL Region

Distribution: *Arran McPherson, A/ADM EOS*

Drafting Officer/ Rédacteur

B. Davis/J. Diamond/T. Blanchard/R. Lambert/J. Perry

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Overview of the Sentinel Survey

The Sentinel Survey was started in 1994 in the Atlantic Provinces and Quebec. The DFO NL Region survey was a logical evolution of an “index” fishers program that started in 1990 as a result of a recommendation of the Harris Panel Report and operated under the Northern Cod Science Program.

In 1994, the purpose of the program was to 1) maintain a “signal” about the stocks under moratorium in the absence of data from commercial fisheries and 2) to better incorporate the knowledge of harvesters into stock assessments. DFO Science continued to do annual multi-species surveys that included cod in the offshore areas of the continental shelf. The sentinel survey collected data from the inshore areas and addressed questions related to distribution of fish. Data from offshore surveys and the sentinel survey are still both included in annual stock assessments for cod.

The sentinel surveys around Newfoundland and Labrador are delivered via annual service contract (let through PWGSC) valued at \$1.2M to the Fish, Food and Allied Workers (FFAW) union. This is the cash value of the contract and does not include any revenues from fish sales from the survey. The FFAW sub-contract up to 100 small fishing enterprises to fish and gather data in specific locations close to their home ports. Each enterprise is paid for vessel charter, some fishing gear, bait, fuel and some miscellaneous costs. They operate under a Fisheries Act Section 52 science licence. These licences allow harvesters to operate in areas that are or were under moratorium. The data (catch rates, biological information on the health of fish, sexual maturities, otoliths (ear bones) for fish aging, etc., are woven into the stock assessments for various cod stocks around the island and Labrador.

The survey is designed to harvest the minimal amount of fish that will provide solid science data. Catches over the last 24 years have been up to approximately 275 tonnes annually. Most scientific surveys discard fish back into the sea but most, if not all of the fish are dead with this practice. It was decided by DFO and the FFAW during the survey design that fish caught in the survey would be retained and sold and proceeds (~\$100-\$300K max) would be used to defray project costs. It is the contractor, the FFAW union, who receives the funds from fish buyers and applies them to project costs. Fish sale revenues do not flow through DFO. In 1994, there were no legislative mechanisms to allocate fish for research as we now have in Section 10 of the Fisheries Act. Fish sale revenues are identified in the contract as a contribution to the overall balance sheet for the survey. Fish harvesters are trained in science data collection and keep records for us. A side-benefit of these records is very accurate records of harvests.

The sentinel survey cannot be undertaken through a Section 10 Collaborative Agreement. Most cod populations in the survey remain under moratorium and in the Critical Zone of DFO’s precautionary approach (PA). If a Section 10 approach to the survey were considered, an

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allocation far in excess of 275 tonnes would be needed to generate enough revenue to pay for the work. In addition, Canada would be under scrutiny and possible criticism from other countries who would see the sentinel survey as another commercial fishery as has been suggested with the NL Stewardship Fishery.

DFO has not conducted audits of the FFAW of the revenues generated from fish sales. Any records would be between fish buyers and the FFAW. However, audits of the program could be considered in the future.